

MAGNIFICENT SECOND HALF RALLY IN VAIN

WEAKNESSES IN FORWARD LINE : GODFREY'S FINE DEBUT

(By CHILTERN)

TORQUAY UNITED 2
(Hutchinson 2)

LUTON TOWN 1
(Cook)

TORQUAY UNITED.—Maggs; Green, Tapp; Daniels, Jones, Lievesley; Morgan, Beedall, Hunt (S. W.), Hutchinson, Dodds

LUTON TOWN.—Coen, Mackey, Smith; Gooney, Nelson, Godfrey; Hodge, Martin, Cook, Roberts, Rich.

Referee.—B. Ames, Redditch.

IT often happens that the better footballing side is beaten, and this was the case at TORQUAY, where LUTON TOWN made a magnificent, but unsuccessful effort, to gain both points, and thus give their championship chances a decided fillip.

The United were out to beat the Town at any cost, and they succeeded by tactics that can be given no other name than "spoiling." At this phase of the game they showed themselves to be past masters, and their bustling type of play was in direct contrast to the Town's more thoughtful and decidedly more scientific methods.

ROUGH PLAY

A strong side, Torquay handed out plenty of the "rough stuff," and throughout the game it was man or ball, and very often it was the former. Despite this there were no serious injuries, and Martin was the worst sufferer with bad bruises. Still, the referee controlled the game very well, and it was due to his promptness that the Town players came out of the game almost unscathed. He was quick in giving his decisions, and most fair in his dealings.

The ground was very heavy after nearly 24 hours' rain, but this was more welcome to Luton than the hard, bumpy grounds we have had of late. There was a fair amount of grass on the pitch, but it was a good job there had been some rain, otherwise the unevenness of the surface would have caused more anxiety than it did. The ball was difficult enough to control as it was, for the turf was very treacherous.

DESERVED A POINT

On the run of the play a draw would have been an equitable result, for after a mediocre first half the Town rose to the occasion in grand style, and despite the shock of a goal a minute after the resumption, they fought tenaciously. For long periods they pressed, but they had some extremely bad luck, especially when Cook seemed to have equalised, and the ball struck Maggs on the knee when it appeared to have beaten him all the way.

COULD NOT SETTLE DOWN

Before the interval Luton just could not settle down, and the forwards were badly out of gear. They simply could not get going, and the quick tackling of the home defence put a speedy end to any ideas of combination which the Town might have cherished. There was no gainsaying that the homesters were the superior side as far as actual play was concerned in this period, but although their forwards were furnished with several chances they did not make much impression on the defence, which was noticeable for its solidity.

MORE COHESION

A rather lucky goal was the only one conceded at the interval, towards which the Town forwards began to show more cohesion, and their movements contained much more potential danger. Hitherto they had been seldom in the picture, and the inside men and Hodge were falling far short of the standard expected.

Noting this improvement towards half-time, we expected something better in the second half, despite the fact that the fairly stiff breeze was against the Town. Then came a bad blow, for an unstoppable shot by Hutchinson counted as the second goal, and things looked exceedingly black. The Town rallied in grand fashion, and the lead was reduced.

MAGGS BUSY

For twenty-five minutes or so the United were penned in their own half, and Maggs was given plenty to do. His charge had several narrow escapes, but

the home defence stuck to their guns, and although they conceded many free kicks for fouls, they proved too strong for the Town forwards, whose shortcomings were evident. Then came a short period when Torquay took up the offensive, and nearly added to their lead. However, Luton made a great final effort, but it was no good, and the United left the field with two points which they did not deserve.



FORWARD WEAKNESSES

There were weaknesses in the Town front line, and Martin and Roberts did not have a successful afternoon. They worked hard enough, but there was not sufficient punch in their play. Much of their work was clever, and pretty to watch, but it never seemed to lead to anything. Martin, I admit, was handicapped because Hodge simply would not take the ball up the wing in the first half, and he wasted many chances in this fashion. The winger's display was very disappointing.

It may be that he is not quite fit; he certainly gave the impression in the early part of the game, when he seemed to be dragging his leg behind him. His general play was too dainty in view of the methods adopted by the opposition, but why he did not take the ball on, time after time, I cannot imagine. He certainly improved after the interval, but even then he was by no means dangerous, and missed more than one chance. Some of his centres were good, but I thought he was slow in crossing the ball, and this allowed the defence to get into position.

MORE SHOTS WANTED

To revert to the inside forwards, the conditions were definitely against players of their type, but I would like to see them having more shots at goal. The value of this was proved by Hutchinson, who scored both goals from long range with first time shots, and went near on two or three occasions afterwards. Both goals could come into the "lucky" class, but "Never venture never gain," and it was all gain for Torquay.

Cook, on his re-appearance in the first team, was far from being a failure, and his persistency earned him approbation even from the home supporters. Jones kept a tight watch on him, and although he did not receive the right kind of passes, he was always on the spot, and proved an enthusiastic leader. His goal was well-deserved, and with any luck he would have saved a point.

RICH SHINES

Rich was the best forward, although I am sure he is more at home on the right wing. He was fast, and in the first half was the only member of the Town front line to be consistently dangerous. He hit the bar with a beautiful shot, and went near on several other occasions. His speed often carried him through the defence, and he controlled a difficult ball well.

Neither Gooney nor Godfrey let the side down, and Godfrey was the best half back. He played some grand football, and always made good use of the ball. Not afraid to mix it despite his lack of weight, he can look upon his debut in the senior team as entirely satisfactory. One of the most pleasing things was the understanding which he and Smith reached soon after the start. They had never played together before, but no one would have thought that for a moment, so well did they take up position.

Gooney played a thoughtful game, and he, too, used the ball to the utmost advantage. His defensive work was sound, but his aptitude for wandering into the centre of the field might lead him into trouble. Both wing halves kept the ball low, and they played football in the best sense of the word.

NELSON NOT SO PROMINENT

Nelson was not as prominent as usual, and some of the strength we have come to look for in this department was lacking. Hunt was completely blotted out of the game, and the number of shots

he had at goal could be counted on one hand, but somehow Nelson was not the dominating figure we now expect to see. He was rather slow in clearing the ball, and this had something to do with the scoring of the second goal. Still everyone has an off day, and his recent displays have called for the highest praise.

STEADY BACKS

There was nothing wrong with the backs. Mackey's inclusion brought about a big improvement, and after a shaky quarter of an hour, he settled down to play a steady game. His kicking left nothing to be desired, and his only fault was that he gave Dodds rather a lot of room in which to work in the first half. Smith made few mistakes, and was as good as any defender on the field. In the second half nearly all the work fell on him, for Torquay's visits to the Luton goal were mainly confined to breaksaway on the right wing. These he speedily dealt with in a most capable way.

Coen made many good saves, and could scarcely be blamed for either of the goals. For the first shot he was out of position after having punched away. It might be said that he could have caught the ball in the first place, but this is sometimes a dangerous practice. He had no chance at all with the second goal, and was evidently unsighted by Mackey.

FAST PACE

A fast pace was kept up throughout the game, and there were many thrills. The only goal of the first half was secured by HUTCHINSON with a first-time drive from over 20 yards out. Rich went nearest to equalising with a drive which struck the bar.

A minute after the interval HUTCHINSON again found the net, this time from 35 yards' range, but Luton were not deterred, and COOK took a ball which had rebounded off Martin, and beat Maggs easily. The Town took encouragement from this success, and Maggs was kept busy for some considerable time. Cook and Roberts made good efforts, and then Luton faded out for a time. They came again near the end, and made some great efforts to save a point, but all in vain. Their luck was definitely out, while Torquay had all that was going.